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# Fort Hays State University Faculty Senate Minutes, February 25, 1969

FHSU Faculty Senate

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### Recommended Citation

FHSU Faculty Senate, "Fort Hays State University Faculty Senate Minutes, February 25, 1969" (1969). *Faculty Senate*. 578.  
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*Sent to Pres. Office 3-17-69*

Discussion: Incompletes and Absences, A proposal from the Division of Lang. Lit. and Speech for a change in the statement of the College policy regarding incompletes and absences was distributed to the Senate members. A copy of the proposal is attached to the Minutes.

RECOMMENDATION: It was moved by Dr. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Ginther that the Catalog copy which provides direction for removing an incomplete be changed to read as follows: (SEE MINUTES FOR DESCRIPTION OF "INCOMPLETE"). Motion carried.

Discussion: Second portion of the proposal from the Division of Lang. Lit. and Speech dealing with the problem of student absences was discussed. Discussion will be continued at the next Senate meeting.

Proposed Catalog statement from Student Council concerning absences attached to Minutes.

**Minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Senate, Tuesday, February 25, 1969, at 3:30 p.m., in the Office of the Dean of the Faculty.**

**Members Present:** Mr. Ginther, Mr. Schroder, Dr. Thomas, Mrs. Popp, Dr. Sackett, Miss Christopher, Dr. Miller, Mrs. Theis, Dr. Witten, Dr. Oliva, Mr. Dalton, Mr. Finnin and Dr. Garwood, Chairman.

**Members Absent:** Dr. Hamilton.

**Also Present:** Mr. Kellerman and Miss Lois Ruder.

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Garwood, Chairman.

**INCOMPLETES AND ABSENCES.** Dr. Sackett, Senate representative from the Division of Language, Literature and Speech, distributed a proposal for a change in the statement of the College policy regarding incompletes and absences. A copy of the proposal was distributed to all Senate members and a copy is attached to the Minutes.

The present Catalog statement which deals with incompletes (page 60) reads as follows:

"Arrangements for completing a course for which an Incomplete (I) is given should be made by the student as soon as possible. All incomplete work should be completed within a year after the incomplete is made."

Dr. Sackett said that a question arises when an incomplete is not completed within the year. How long a period is available to complete the work? He said that a graduate student in the Division of Language, Literature and Speech maintained

that the College had no authority to close out her grade. The student wanted to retain the incomplete on the transcript for a period considerably longer than a year.

With this thought in mind, he said the Division of Language, Literature and Speech was submitting the following revised statement for the Catalog:

"Arrangements for completing a course for which an incomplete (I) is given should be made by the student as soon as possible. In the event the incomplete work is not completed within one year after the incomplete is made, the course grade will automatically become a U. Cases where there are mitigating circumstances or unusual hardships may be appealed to the Faculty Senate."

Mr. Dalton was asked if the Registrar's Office could handle the administrative work which would be necessitated by the proposal. It appears that this would cause no particular problem.

What about theses and problems which may entail several years to complete? Would a U be given at the end of the year? It was pointed out that if the work is not completed, this does not mean that the student has flunked. Why not simply retain an incomplete or withdraw passing rather than flunk the student? The punitive aspects of the proposal were subject to question. What about the student who might graduate with just enough grade points and with an incomplete on his transcript? Would it not be conceivable that after the year the incomplete would be changed to a U then we would have a transcript with insufficient grade points to graduate? The problems of changing an incomplete to an automatic U after an interval time of one year was discussed. Reference was made to

the General Catalog of Kansas State College of Pittsburg.

After some discussion, it was moved by Dr. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Ginther that the Catalog copy which provides direction for removing an incomplete be changed to read as follows:

"Arrangements for completing a course for which an incomplete (I) is given should be made by the student as soon as possible. All incomplete work must be completed within a year after the incomplete is made.

"If the work is not completed within this time, the 'Incomplete' will remain on the record and credit can be given only when the student re-enrolls and completes the course satisfactorily.

"This rule shall not apply, as to time, to the Graduate Division in courses of any individual study such as theses, problems, research or seminars. It will apply to all other courses in the Graduate Division in which classwork is ordinarily completed in the process of the regular semester."

Motion carried.

The second portion of the proposal dealt with the problem of student absences. The present Catalog statement under "Attendance," page 62, reads as follows:

"Regular attendance in all courses is expected of students, and no system of 'cuts' is recognized by the College. Students who know they must be absent from classes should notify their instructors in advance and, with the consent of the instructors, arrange to make up work missed. Some offices (Health, Registrar's, Dean's, etc.) may inform instructors of reasons for students' absence, but these are not excuses.

"Attendance should begin the first day of classes."

The proposed Catalog statement from the Division of Language, Literature and Speech reads as follows:

"The student is required to attend all class meetings on time, beginning with the first day of classes. Excessive absences may result in lower grades or in failure. Some offices (Health, Registrar's, Dean's, Dean of Students, etc.) may inform instructors of reasons for students' absences, but these absences are not excused. If the student's participation in organized college activities, etc., should require his missing a class period, it is his responsibility to notify his instructors in advance, and, if they consent, to arrange to make up the work he will miss. If he misses a class period because of illness, a death in the family, etc., it is his responsibility to see his instructors and, if they consent, to arrange to make up the work he has missed. Instructors are under no obligation to allow students to make up tests, papers, or other assignments which are missed because of absences, though instructors may allow students this privilege if in their opinion there is good reason. If a student has a paper due on a day he is ill, he should make every reasonable effort to send the paper in time for it to arrive by the hour it is due. If a student misses a class for any reason whatever, he is responsible for what goes on in class on that day; he is responsible for the information presented if it should be called for on a test, and he is responsible for meeting any assignments made."

Dr. Sackett said that the proposed statement would be beneficial to both faculty and students because it sets out definitely the regulations dealing with absences. Some instructors require that the students be in class each day and absences are considered when arriving at the student's grade. On the other hand some instructors do not penalize the students for missing classes. Dr. Sackett said that each instructor should have the academic freedom to regulate his class as he sees fit.

Mr. Mike Finnin of the Student Council cited the case of a student who attended

class but sat in a seat not assigned to him on the seating chart. Consequently, he was counted absent on a number of occasions. In this case the student had his grade penalized because the person who checked the seating chart assumed he was missing class.

Dr. Sackett said that the description of the class indicated that this would have been an Introduction to Literature class. He observed that the students were informed at the beginning of the year that it was necessary that they attend class and that students were supplied a seating chart which indicated where they were to be seated. He said that the student was penalized for not following directions as he should have. He felt that if the instructor wishes to organize his class in a particular fashion, it is the responsibility of the student to adapt himself accordingly.

Up to the year 1936, the College had a policy which permitted one "cut" per hour of class. Some students would take the "cuts" on the premise that they were entitled to miss class.

Some instructors, usually those with little teaching experience, may tell the members of the class that attendance is optional and they do not care whether the student comes to class. This may be an ego-building situation for the instructor but it is not a creative class situation for the student. Certainly every student should attend his classes on the premise that he can learn more about the subject by being in class than by missing the class.

Miss Ruder of the Student Council felt that the teachers should make his

lectures so interesting that the student would not want to "cut" the class. If a teacher has many absentees she said, it should occur to him that his class is lacking something.

Some instructors take roll of attendance but they do not penalize the students for being absent. The student penalizes himself by being absent. If a student misses a test, there should be a legitimate reason for missing a class if a test is to be made up.

The State pays the teacher to teach the class. By the same token the State has a great deal of money invested in the student's education and it was reasoned that the student should attend class regularly to take advantage of what the State is offering him.

Mr. Finnin asked if it is the student's responsibility to sit in a class or should he try in his own way to secure an education in the way that was best for him?

If a student is absent from class because of sickness, death in the family or if he is representing the College on a College-sponsored trip, the student has a right to request permission to make up any scheduled examination which he may have missed.

One of the problems of missed examinations is that sometimes the examination questions may be passed along to those who missed the test.

Miss Ruder and Mr. Finnin felt that the student needs protection against

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instructors who penalize him unfairly, they felt, for absences. If the student takes all of the examinations, turns in all of his papers, why should he be penalized for missing a class?

The discussion will be continued at the next Senate meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p. m.

John D. Garwood, Chairman

Lucille Drees, Recorder